

REVIEWS.

ART. XII. *Tablas Necrologicas del Colera-Morbus en la Ciudad de la Habana y sus Arrabales Formadas a escitacion del Excmo. Senor Intendente de Ejercito Conde di Villanueva.* Por DON RAMON DE LA SAGRA. Habana, 1833.

OF the very many places which have been visited by the spasmodic cholera, since the appearance of that disease in America, there are few which have suffered in so dreadful a manner—where the pestilence has carried off so large a portion of the population in so short a space of time—as the Havana. To those who are acquainted with the topography of the place, with the nature of its localities and climate, this excessive mortality cannot be a matter of astonishment. They are well aware that the Havana is a seaport town, containing the sources of impure exhalations, so uniformly encountered in situations of the sort—that it is built in a manner little suited to correct the effects of those effluvia, and inhabited by a people, the lower portions of whom are far from holding cleanliness in the light of a virtue—that it contains a large population concentrated within a narrow compass—that a considerable portion of that population consists of slaves subjected to great hardships and privations, and of free people of colour, who, like the same class in other parts of the world, are probably negligent of hygienic measures; intemperate in their mode of living; possess other habits of a nature calculated to render them more prone to the disease, and to increase the virulence of its attack, and destitute of the means requisite for commanding efficient professional aid; and finally, that it is subjected to the sanitary regulations of a government and medical corporation, entertaining opinions relative to the mode of propagation of the malady likely to lead to the adoption of measures totally inadequate to arrest or mitigate the progress of the evil. So far indeed were those aware of the above circumstances from being astonished, that by many with whom we conversed or corresponded, it was anticipated, last autumn, that the cholera would not be long before making its appearance in that city, and that when it did so, its ravages would be considerable. The result has unfortunately but too well shown that they were not deceived in their calculations.

The work before us is, we believe, the first that has appeared on the subject of the effects of the disease at the Havana. As its title sufficiently indicates, the researches of the author, Don Ramon de la Sagra, were undertaken at the suggestion of the Intendent. Hence the statements contained in it may be regarded as official, and entitled to confidence. From these circumstances, as well as from the interesting nature of the results recorded in this work, and the statistical information it contains, we have been induced to prepare and present to our readers a brief abstract of its contents.

The author's account of the mortality from cholera is not founded on the reports of the cemeteries. These reports, he discovered, indicated only the absolute number of burials, and afforded in consequence but a very imperfect basis for a classification of the dead according to colour, age, sex, &c. For this reason he had recourse to the parochial reports and documents, and obtained from them a great part of the information he required for the above purpose. But besides examining these documents, in the parish churches, both within and without the walls, Don Ramon procured and made use of the reports of admission in, and discharges from, the military and civil wards of the Royal Hospitals, of the temporary establishments for the poor, of the Royal Arsenal, and of the *Campo de Marto*. It is on this extensive set of documents, that his calculations are based. The result of these he has presented in the form of tables, containing statements of the daily mortality from cholera in the city generally, from the commencement to near the termination of the disease; of the number of deaths in each parish separately, as well as of that in each class of individuals, in each sex, at each period of life, &c.

It is very much to be regretted, that the author has not stated the amount of population of those parts of the district of the Havana, of the mortality of which, from cholera, he treats in the volume before us. Such a statement ought, in all publications of the kind, to be carefully made, and in this instance should not assuredly have been neglected, as it would have afforded the reader the means of making many comparisons and calculations, which the author has neglected to notice. He refers, it is true, on that head, to the census of 1828, which, it would appear, he himself drew up, as well as to his statistical work on Cuba—*Historia Economico-Politica y Estadistica de la Isla de Cuba*. But on referring to the latter, we find only the reports for 1792, 1817, and 1827. In the two first, the population of the Havana and its suburbs is stated separately, but in the last it is combined with that of the surrounding rural districts, and therefore cannot be ascertained satisfactorily. In the second volume of the Bulletin

of the Statistical Society of Paris, we find that the population of the city and suburbs of the Havana amounted in 1827 to 70,595—32,355 whites, and 38,243 coloured people; and that in 1830, it amounted to 112,023, of whom 64,621 were white, and 47,402 coloured, (23,562 free, and 23,840 slaves.) On examination, however, it was found, that neither the first nor the second of these estimates, which was furnished by Sr. De Sagra, (and which it is astonishing he did not make use of in the present work,) could have formed the basis of his calculations relative to the rates of mortality in the different classes of the population. The one is too small, the other too large. Hence we are left in the dark on that subject, and must content ourselves with the comparisons and calculations we find in the work before us. But be that population what it may, it results, from the researches of Sr. De Sagra, consigned in his large statistical work, that the average mortality in the Havana during the five years, 1825–29, amounted to 3113.4 annually; 1852.6 among the coloured people, and 1260.8 among the whites. From the present work, we learn that in the same period, the average relative mortality among the white and coloured population in the different parishes of which the city is composed, was—

In the Parish of the	<i>Catedral</i>	-	-	34½	whites to	65½	coloured.
"	Santo Angel	-	-	38½	"	61½	"
"	Espiritu Santo	-	-	32½	"	67½	"
"	San Cristo	-	-	31½	"	68½	"
"	Nuestra Sra. de	}	}	47½	"	52½	"
	Guadalupe						
"	Jesus Maria	-	-	40	"	60	"

The relative proportion among the sexes in those two classes of individuals was, among the whites, 55 males to 45 females; and among the coloured people, 51 males to 49 females. If we have regard to the various classes of the coloured population, we find that the proportion in every 100 deaths was—

42	males to	58	females among	free mulattoes.
46	"	54	"	slave "
45	"	55	"	free negroes.
60	"	40	"	slave "

We have entered into these details in order to have some points of comparison in our subsequent remarks, and to be able to show the modifications occasioned in the rates of mortality by the cholera. The disease made its first appearance on the 26th of February, in the parish of Nuestra Sra de Guadalupe, which is situated on the outside of the walls, and contains a large number of narrow and filthy streets,

inhabited by the lowest orders of the population. The deaths on that day amounted to five, three among male whites, one among the free male mulattoes, and one among the female slave negroes. From that day to the 20th of April, the epidemic prevailed with more or less intensity, and gave rise in that short space to a mortality of not less than 8,253. Of this number, Don Ramon de Sagra was able to ascertain the colour, condition, age and sex of 7,435. The balance, 818, is accounted for by 114 deaths, which occurred in the barracks, forts, and the floating hospital of the navy, and of which no registers were kept in the parishes and hospitals, as well as by 704 interments of which no details could be obtained.

From the 26th of February, the number of deaths increased till the 27th of March, when it attained its maximum,—380. From that date the disease gradually decreased until the 20th of April, when the number of deaths did not exceed 12, and the epidemic was considered to have ceased. The diminution of the mortality took place less rapidly than the increase; for on the 10th day of the epidemic, the number of burials exceeded 100; while on the 7th of April, or thirteen days before the termination of the reports, it was reduced to 60, and the disease had not disappeared at the end of that period. If, however, we take the whole number of days, from the commencement to the cessation of the reports, fifty-four, we shall find that a greater interval elapsed between the first cases and the period of maximum of the mortality, than between that period and the cessation of the epidemic. Be this, however, as it may, it will be found by examining the tables from which the above facts are derived, that from the 7th to the 18th of March, the average mortality exceeded 150; the extremes being 192, (17th,) and 55, (8th.) From the 18th to the 21st, the average was 265, the numbers varying from 380, (27th,) to 248, (18th.) From the 21st to the 20th, it amounted to 343, the numbers varying from 380 to 306. From that day to the 6th of April, the average mortality was reduced to 161; the extreme numbers being 293, (29th,) and 89, (4th April.)

The mortality among the whites did not amount to one-half of that among the coloured population; for of 7435 cases, of whom a detailed account was obtained by the author, 2365 were whites, and 5070 coloured. Nor were the deaths equally distributed among the sexes; for of the amount just stated there were 3954 males, and 3480 females. Indeed, as to the former there must probably be added, the greater number of deaths occurring in the barracks, forts and floating hospital of the navy, as well as of the unregistered cases, it results that the excess of mortality among males was really greater than

is indicated by the above statement. But while such was the relative mortality among the sexes taken in the aggregate, without reference to colour, the proportion of deaths was not the same among the males and females of the white and coloured population taken separately, or even among each class of each colour. The following table will show the number of deaths among the males and females of those different classes in the 7435 individuals above mentioned:—

WHITES.				Males.				Females.			
American	-	-	-	760	-	-	-	881	-	-	-
Spaniards	-	-	-	414	-	-	-	51	-	-	-
Foreigners	-	-	-	32	-	-	-	11	-	-	-
Undetermined	-	-	-	130	-	-	-	86	-	-	-
COLOURED.											
Free Creole negroes	-	-	-	438	-	-	-	632	-	-	-
Slave do. do.	-	-	-	219	-	-	-	258	-	-	-
Free African do.	-	-	-	492	-	-	-	521	-	-	-
Slave do. do.	-	-	-	980	-	-	-	590	-	-	-
Free Creole mulattoes	-	-	-	208	-	-	-	301	-	-	-
Slave do. do.	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	22	-	-	-
Undetermined	-	-	-	270	-	-	-	127	-	-	-

From these statements of the number of deaths from cholera, it results according to Sr. De Sagra, that the mortality, from that cause alone, amounted in the short space of fifty-four days, to about 8 per cent. of the whole number of the inhabitants. It will be found, however, from what we have stated relatively to the mortality in each class of individuals, and in each sex, that the proportion of deaths among them differed considerably. The following table, which we transcribe from the work under review, will establish this fact in a satisfactory manner:—

White males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 per cent.
White females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 "
Free male mulattoes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 "
Free female do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 "
Slave male do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 "
Slave female do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 "
Free Creole negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10 "
Free Creole female negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11 "
Slave Creole male negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 "
Slave Creole female negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6½ "
African free negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19 "
African free female negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17 "
Slave African negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10½ "
Slave African female negroes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8½ "

From this statement it will be found, that the largest mortality occurred among the free African negroes of the two sexes; that next to them the free Creole negroes, males and females, suffered in the highest degree; while the smallest mortality occurred among the whites and mulattoes.

By comparing the population of that part of the city which is situated within the walls, and that of the out parishes, to the mortality in each of those districts, Sr. De Sagra found, that the proportion of deaths in the various classes of inhabitants presented some difference:—

	Intra Muros. Per cent.	Extra Muros. Per cent.
Whites - - - - -	4	6
Free mulattoes - - - - -	9	7
Slave do. - - - - -	3	16
Free negroes - - - - -	17	12
Slave do. - - - - -	8	12½

The extent of the mortality differed considerably in the different parishes. Of the 7435 deaths, of which, as we have already mentioned, an account was obtained by the author, the number in each parish was as follows:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
La Catedral - - - - -	228	140	368
El Espiritu Santo - - - - -	275	479	754
El Santo Cristo - - - - -	198	228	426
El Santo Angel - - - - -	134	202	336
Jesus Maria - - - - -	507	689	1196
Nuestra Sra de Guadalupe - - - - -	1322	1196	2518
Nuestra Sra del Pilar, Jesus del Monte y el Cerro } - - - - -	568	362	930
Hospitals - - - - -	723	184	907
Total - - - - -	3955	3480	7435

It is proper to remark, that the three first of those parishes are inhabited by the genteel and wealthy classes of society; that they, as well as the fourth, are situated within the walls of the city; while the others are located on the outside. The relative proportion of deaths among the white and coloured parts of the population of some of those parishes was greatly modified by the disease, as will be found by comparing the results obtained in ordinary seasons, to the following statement of the proportion during the epidemic.

Catedral	-	-	-	-	-	31 whites to 69 coloured.
Santo Angel	-	-	-	-	-	29 " 71 "
Espiritu Santo	-	-	-	-	-	28½ " 71½ "
Santo Cristo	-	-	-	-	-	27 " 73 "
Nuestra Sra de Guadalupe	-	-	-	-	-	54½ " 65½ "
Jesus Maria	-	-	-	-	-	27 " 73 "

As regards the relative mortality of the sexes in each class during the prevalence of the epidemic, it will be found, when compared to that noticed in ordinary years, to have been somewhat modified among the white, but not at all among the coloured population. Thus, instead of 55 males to 45 females in every 100 deaths among the former, the proportion was changed to 59 males to 41 females; while among the people of colour, the proportion remained the same as in ordinary seasons—51 males to 49 females. This similarity in the proportion, however, will only hold, if we have regard to the mortality among the males and females of the coloured population considered in the aggregate; for if we examine the mortality in the various classes of which that population is composed, the uniformity no longer will be found to exist. Thus instead of the proportions which we have stated to occur in each class, during ordinary seasons, it was discovered that in every 100 deaths, there were—

48 males to 52 females among free mulattoes.

49½ " 50½ " slave "

44 " 56 " free negroes.

54 " 46 " slave "

From an examination of these proportions, and a comparison of them with those obtained during ordinary seasons, it results, that the ravages of the epidemic was greater among female than male mulattoes, as well as among male than female negroes, both in a free and slave condition. In ordinary seasons also these occur, in every 100 deaths, 41 among the whites to 59 among people of colour. During the cholera the proportion was changed to 50 among the whites, to 70 among people of colour. In other words, the mortality among the whites decreased at the rate of 11 per cent, while that among the coloured population increased in the same ratio. The author remarks, that by comparing the ordinary average daily mortality of the Havana, to the average daily number of deaths during the prevalence of the epidemic, it will be seen that in general the former amounts to about 10, while during the latter period it rose to 153; consequently, that in the short space of fifty-four days, there perished in the Havana and its suburbs, as many individuals as usually die in the same place in the course of twenty-six months.

The following table will show the proportion of the mortality among individuals of various periods of life, and in each class of the population.

Periods.	Whites.		Free Mulat.		Slave Mulat.		Free Negroes.		Slave Negroes.		Totals.		General Total.
	Male.	Fem.	Male.	Fem.	Male.	Fem.	Male.	Fem.	Male.	Fem.	Male.	Fem.	
From birth to 7	307	257	60	51	7	9	139	137	93	91	606	545	1151
7 to 10	42	34	17	9	1	1	20	29	15	17	95	90	185
10 to 15	36	42	8	16	1	1	34	28	35	39	114	126	240
15 to 20	36	49	16	19	6	2	27	41	67	67	152	178	330
20 to 30	184	114	28	50	3	3	103	174	237	190	555	531	1086
30 to 40	145	110	18	52	2	6	95	163	140	121	400	452	852
40 to 50	161	85	12	34	1	1	90	154	73	58	337	332	669
50 to 60	101	87	16	16			72	108	46	25	235	236	471
60 to 70	68	53	4	16			29	77	16	10	117	156	273
70 to 80	19	37	4	6			19	32	9	7	51	82	133
80 to 90	13	19	2	2			4	13	1		20	34	54
Undetermined	338	142	40	40	9	12	351	240	649	284	1387	718	2105
Omissions -													704
Total - -	1450	1029	225	311	30	35	983	1196	1381	909	4609	3480	8253

By comparing the number of individuals who die at various periods of life in ordinary times, to that of persons who were carried off, at corresponding periods, during the prevalence of the epidemic, it will be found, that among the whites the mortality was greater during the cholera in persons between 20 and 60, and smaller in children and infants; although at that time the measles prevailed extensively among children. Among the coloured population, the number of deaths during the epidemic was more considerable in individuals between thirty and forty, and less so at other periods of life than is found to be the case at other times. This smaller proportion of deaths was particularly observable in infants and old people, among both of which classes the mortality was very small.

In ordinary seasons, the proportion of deaths in the two classes of the population—white and coloured, from birth to the tenth year, is found to be—

		White.		Coloured.
From birth to 1 year	-	66 per cent.	-	61 per cent.
1 3	-	21 “	-	19 “
3 10	-	13 “	-	17 “

But during the epidemic, the proportion in corresponding periods, was—

		White.		Coloured.
From birth to 1 year	-	32 per cent.	-	27 per cent.
1 3	-	29 "	-	30 "
3 10	-	39 "	-	43 "

This fact, as the author very justly remarks, confirms the observation already made, that children and infants are much less prone to the disease than adults.

Sr. De Sagra was not able to collect information relative to the professions and trades of the individuals carried off by the disease—to their modes of life, habits, dwellings, &c. Yet, from the documents he had the opportunity of consulting, he thinks, he can conclude, that the most vicious were not more prone than others to the disease; and that the pestilence was particularly destructive among individuals exposed to the greatest privations. The wealthy portions of the city presented the smallest mortality; while, on the contrary, the largest number of deaths occurred in the most populated districts. In order to compare the mortality in the various parishes, it is necessary to be apprised of the circumstance, that of the great number of deaths among coloured people, which occurred in the parish *Del Cerro*, more than one-half proceeded from the depositories of runaway negroes, and other establishments situated within its jurisdiction.

The author of the work of whose contents we have thus offered a brief analysis, is not a member of the medical profession. Hence he has abstained from entering on a variety of subjects, which would have proved interesting to his medical readers, but most of which, as experience has served to convince us, physicians alone can with propriety undertake to elucidate; as, for example, the history of the disease, its origin, mode of propagation, character, as well as the textural alterations revealed on dissection, the most beneficial modes of treatment, and the proportion of deaths to the sick. It is to be hoped, that some experienced and intelligent practitioner will, ere long, furnish to the medical public the desired details on each of these points.

La R.